1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

of specialist among the Trumaí that is not reported for the Kamayurá, and it is to this type that the term "shaman" is applied in the following description. The Trumaí "shaman," in this sense, is a man who possessed extra-visionary powers through which he could locate enemy war parties and "see" the afterworld.

The source of the visionary shaman's and also the curing shaman's power is revealed nowhere in Quains' notes, nor do we have any information on other aspects of the associated belief system. Oberg's Kamayurá informants told him that personal spirits are acquired during illness, and it is contact with one's spirit which gives the power.[3] This may well be true in Trumaí culture also, but the very fact that Quain did not perceive this, even granting the language barrier, might indicate a decline in the strength of animistic belief.

"Seeing," as Quain translates Trumaí shamanism, took place only at night. (Quain was told that if a shaman inhaled large quantities of tobacco smoke during the day, his temples would pound.) Since one of the main purposes of shamanism was to detect enemies and the fear of attack was greatest at night, it was then that knowledge was felt to be most necessary. Shamanism, it should be stressed, revolved around one of the central themes in Trumaí life, fear of other tribes; the pronouncements of the shaman were almost always that enemies were near and that danger was acute. These were generally believed without question by his audience.

The procedure was simple. When the talk in the men's circle stressed the possibility of a raid, the shaman was called upon to "see." A hushed silence fell over the group. Even Quain was asked to stop speaking and using his typewriter. The shaman turned his back on the assembly, inhaled large amounts of tobacco smoke, his only paraphernalia, and seemed to concentrate deeply. Quain could detect no traces of tobacco narcosis, but it was possible that a mild reaction was produced. After a few minutes of intense concentration, the shaman faced about and announced the results of his activity. This was usually to the effect that he had seen Suyá, or, less often, Bororo, Yuruna, or a tribe of the immediate region. A Trumaí shaman could also find lost articles, but this was secondary to "seeing" the enemy. One shaman claimed to have seen the land of the dead, but there was no suggestion that he had communicated with the deceased.

Only certain older men were visionary shamans. There is no evidence that women were admitted to the practice anywhere in the region. Inheritance of shamanistic power was nominally patrilineal. In 1938 there were three shamans: Yakuma, the chief's oldest biological brother, Alcari's brother Tun, and Matiwana. Tun was the most active practitioner, while Yakuma seldom "saw." Maibu said that the latter was

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

still too young to "see," but that when he was older he would learn, since his father was a shaman. Aloari said that he, too, would learn when he was old, as would his son Tsirikoan. Matiwana would instruct Aloari and would receive a payment for this tutelage. Indicative of a possible looseness of inheritance was the fact that Matiwana's son Yati was nowhere mentioned as a prospective shaman.

Dreams were considered to be a way of "seeing" while sleeping. This was known as *ohltaxer*. Dreams were taken seriously, at least by the dreamer. Aloari fully believed that the Waurá would come after he had dreamed it. And Maibu was convinced that he should make the trip to the Indian post on the Paranatinga River because he had dreamed that Climaco, the agent, liked him very much and would give him a rifle. However, individual dreams were not a matter of community concern or interest. Village action was taken on the basis of shamanistic "seeing" only.

Witchcraft

The only known sorcerer in the Trumaí village was Oirupa, the brother-in-law of Aloari. Oirupa was said by one man to have learned witchcraft (*okei*) from the Nahukwa, who, with the other Cariban tribes, were dreaded for their black magic. Oirupa's knowledge made him one of the most hated men in the village, but no action was taken against him for fear of incurring his enmity. Also, there have been no reports of the execution of sorcerers in the upper Xingú, and, from all indications, this mode of retaliation is not customary.

When someone fell ill and witchcraft was suspected, the guilt was usually imputed to a neighboring tribe. It was said that the Trumaí had to leave their old village site near the Kamayurá because the latter were killing them off with witchcraft. Sorcery was probably often practiced against other groups by the Trumaí, and the converse was always feared. Oirupa refused to speak above a whisper one night when the Aueti were said to be using black magic on the Trumaí.

It was Quain's belief that witchcraft was a substitute for open violence among the people of the area; significantly, witchcraft was not practiced by the people of the upper Xingú against the Suyá and other hostile tribes outside the Basin.[4] Intertribal black magic functioned as a check upon violence within the village as well. Certainly, it was more conducive to social order to attribute sorcery to another tribe than to some member of the small and already disrupted Trumaí community.

[4] Cf. Galvão 1949; Oberg 1953.

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumaí SP23

Crow appeared as a trickster and, although not a creator deity, managed to bring forth new things in the process of his machinations. Waniwani, the name of an abandoned Trumaí village site, was also a village in the heavens — the home of a mythical person of the same name. Jemenary, Kelenewary, and Nane were three other mythological characters. The second was the sister's son (*deta*) of the first, and an inveterate trickster. Although they appear in a Trumaí tale of mythological times, they had no part in the creative process.

Rain (Ka'wixu) was apparently the only Trumaí deity capable of interfering with the world in its present form. Although he appeared as a character in the mythology, he was also believed to be the active agent behind rains and storms. The Trumaí were extremely frightened of thunder and lightning, and thought storms to be the result of someone's having antagonized Rain. During a violent equinoctial thunder storm, Aloari came rushing into Quain's house, imploring him to turn out his light and stop working as he was angering Rain. Despite their fear of displeasing Rain, the Trumaí on a few occasions tried to drive away the clouds. One man blew at the clouds to push them back, while Quain was told to fire his rifle to frighten Rain away.

There was also a class of malignant beings that were important as omens. The Trumaí could not look at a snake called *lesilesi*, seemingly the rattlesnake. Aloari said that shortly after he saw one, two of his brothers died. Jakwalu saw one while she was harvesting manioc in the garden, and it was generally believed that for this reason she would not live long. Quain was uncertain whether this was the immediate result of seeing the snake, or whether the snake was an omen that the Kamayurá were practicing witchcraft on her. Similarly, anyone seeing the *le*, a bird with a red forehead, would die. And finally there were sirens inhabiting the woods to the northeast of the Trumaí village. Their call exerted an attraction, and anyone seeing them or cohabiting with them would surely die. These women had long hair, wore bark cloth pubic coverings, and did not depilate. Significantly, the direction of their abode and their appearance correspond to those of Suyá women. Omens, such as cloud formations and canine howls, indicate the imminence of an enemy attack.

The Origin of Things

Most of the Trumaí mythology is devoted to explaining the origin of the natural world, people, and culture. The chief creator deities are Sun and Wamutsini.

In the beginning there was only Wamutsini. His origin is not explained, and he is probably thought to have always existed. He made daughters out of wood. One of them married Panther, who lived in the

1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

It was Quain's good fortune that a lunar eclipse occurred while he was still in the company of the Trumaí who were escorting him back to civilization. On about November 7, 1938, the moon eclipsed shortly after it rose. When it was first noticed, one man asked Quain to fire his gun. Another danced and shot a burning arrow at the moon. 921 789

The eclipse lasted for more than an hour, and during this time the Indians refused to proceed further. It was necessary to frighten away whatever was eating the moon. To right the disturbance of the natural harmony, Maibu drew himself up to his full stature and addressed the moon at great length. All the tribes in the area, Quain was told, were taking similar measures.

The eclipse was thought to be a harbinger of evil. One man decided to return home in the belief that now the white men would kill him. Yati, who had an infected hand, was sad because Matiwana, his father, would think by this sign that he, Yati, had been "killed" by Mehinaku witchcraft. As Yati's hand grew worse, the rest of the party began to believe that the eclipse was caused by old Matiwana's tears. [787]

Seasons were recognized as "sunny times" and "rainy times," and the number of moons and their phases were used as time-markers. Long periods were reckoned as "when my father was small" or "when I was a boy;" short periods by adding up the passing nights. This latter method was ineffectual for anything after ten days, as ten marked the upper limit of Trumaí counting. 805 [802]

Enumeration of objects was shown by holding up the appropriate combination of fingers. There were words for the numbers one through ten, but ten also signified "a great many." Large quantities could be expressed by gesture as well. When Maibu wanted to indicate many *beijá*, he held up his hand to their height when stacked. 802